



**CITY OF NEWTON
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

BUFFERS & SCREENING

Section 102-290 Buffers and Screening/Buffer Matrix Schedule

In order to reduce the impact of a use of land on adjacent uses which are of a significantly different character, density or intensity, buffers and screening is required in accord with the following:

- (1) **Buffer required.** A buffer consists of a horizontal distance from a lot line which may only be occupied by screening, underground utilities, retention areas and landscaping materials. The required buffering distance in feet between the proposed land uses and the existing adjacent land use on adjoining zoning lots is set forth in the Buffer Matrix, Table 6-1, below. If the land next to the proposed development is vacant, the buffering required shall be determined by the existing zoning on the adjacent vacant parcel. If the adjacent parcel is vacant, but is zoned for a more intensive zoning district, no buffer area shall be required of the less intensive use. The relative degree of intensity shall be determined as follows:
- a. Single family (as used in this section) shall be the least intensive.
 - b. Two-family and multiple families, less than twelve (12) units per acre, shall be the next least intensive.
 - c. Multiple family, more than or equal to twelve (12) units per acre shall be the next least intensive.
 - d. Group 1 shall be the next least intensive.
 - e. Group 2 shall be the next least intensive.
 - f. Group 3 shall be the most intensive.

TABLE 6-1: Buffer Matrix						
<i>Abutting Use or Zoning</i>	<i>Single Family</i>	<i>Two-family and Multi-family</i>		Group 1	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>
		<i>Less than 12 Units/Acre</i>	<i>12 or More Units/Acre</i>			
<i>Proposed Use</i>						
Single family	0	5	20	10	15	30
Two family or Multi-family	5	0	5	10	15	30
Group 1	10	10	10	0	10	20
Group 2	15	15	15	10	0	15
Group 3	30	30	30	20	15	0

- (2) **Screening required.** Screening shall be required along the property boundaries of the zoning lot with the exception that screening such as hedges, fences or walls, not be over four (4) feet tall within the front yard(s).
- a. **Within buffers ten 10) feet or less in required width,** partial screening is required and shall consist of at least the following, together with any additional specifications of the City Manual of City Specifications.
1. One (1) of the following:
 - (i) A row of street trees planted in accordance with the Manual of City Specifications. (This manual can be purchased through the City of Newton Planning Department).
 - (ii) A masonry wall located within the required buffer. This wall must be a minimum height of six (6) feet (above finished grade) and if a block wall, it must be painted on all sides.
 - (iii) A solid wooden fence six (6) feet in height.
 - (iv) A berm and planting combination, with the berm an average height of three (3) feet and dense plantings which will, when combined with the berm, achieve a minimum height of six (6) feet and seventy-five (75) percent capacity in two (2) years.
 2. Lawn, low-growing evergreen shrubs, evergreen ground cover, or rock or wood mulch covering the balance of the buffer.
- b. **Within required buffers of between ten and one-tenth (10.1) feet and fifteen (15) feet in width,** screening is required and must consist one of the following, together with any additional specification of the City Manual of City Specifications.
1. The requirements of (a) above; **and**
 2. A row of evergreen shrubs planted not more than five (5) feet apart to form a continuous hedge, at least six (6) feet high within two (2) years of installation; or a solid brick, stone or wooden fence, a minimum of six (6) feet high; or a berm and planting combination, with the berm having an average height of three (3) feet, and dense evergreen shrubs which, when combined with the berm, achieve a height of six (6) feet of continuous hedge within two (2) years of installation.
- c. **Within required buffers more than fifteen (15) feet in width,** screening is required and must consist of at least the following, together with any additional specifications of the City Manual of City Specifications:
1. The requirements of (2) a above; **or**
 2. A double row of evergreen trees which are not less than ten (10) feet high at time of installation, planted no more than ten (10) feet apart; **and**
 3. Lawn, low-growing evergreen ground cover, or rock or wood mulch covering the balance of the buffer.
- (3). **Alternative buffers and screening.** In lieu of compliance with the above buffer and screening requirements, an applicant may submit to the Planning Director for his review and approval, a detailed

plan and specifications for landscaping and screening. The Planning Director may approve the alternative buffering and screening in writing, upon finding that the proposal will afford a degree of buffering and screening, in terms of height, opacity and separation, equivalent to or exceeding that provided by the above requirements.

- (4). ***Existing vegetation.*** The retention of existing vegetation shall be maximized to the extent practicable, wherever such vegetation contributes to required buffering and screening or to the preservation of significant trees. Exotic, nuisance trees, as listed in the Manual of City Specifications, are not considered significant trees and their removal is encouraged. Where tree replacement is necessary or desired, the selection of significant trees to replace those removed is recommended.
- (5). ***Maintenance and irrigation of landscaping.*** All landscaping and screening which provides required buffering and screening shall be maintained so as to continue their effectiveness.
- (6). ***Determination of unlisted uses.*** The Planning Director shall make a determination, in the cases of uses not listed in Figure 7-1 of the group appropriate for such uses. In reaching the determination, the Planning Director shall be guided by the requirements for similar uses having comparable external effects.

Section 102-291. Screening of open storage.

Open storage shall be screened from view of any street, and from all residentially zoned land by a row of evergreen shrubs or trees planted to form a continuous hedge at least six (6) feet high within two (2) years of installation.

Section 102-292. Screening of mechanical equipment.

All non-residential uses except those permitted in the M-1 and EM-1 Districts shall screen from view of public places and neighboring properties all mechanical equipment, such as but not limited to, ground or roof-mounted air conditioners, air conditioners, or heat pumps, through the use of features which as berms, fences, false facades, or dense landscaping.

Section 102-293. Central solid waste storage area.

All new building and uses, except for single-family and two-family dwellings, must provide facilities for the central storage of solid waste within the lots. Where such facilities are provided outside the building, they shall be screened from adjacent property by an enclosure constructed of materials compatible with the materials on the building.

GROUPS FOR DETERMINING BUFFER AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

GROUP 1:

Cultural Facilities: Galleries, Museums, Libraries

Residential Support Uses: Church/Synagogue, Child Care Center, College/University, School

GROUP 2:

Communication Facilities: Radio and Television Studio, Motion Picture Studio, Telecommunications Tower

Manufacturing, Processing and Assembly: Cabinet Shop, Small

Membership Organizations/Public Facilities: Public service facilities/Public use facilities

Retail: Convenience goods, Bicycle sales, Shopper goods, Gas Station, Liquor stores, Lumber and other building materials, Mail order pickup facility, manufactured home sales, domestic vehicle sales, commercial vehicle sales, service station, used merchandise sales

Services: Banking (automatic teller, bank)

Business Services

Health Services: Health practitioner's, animal hospital/veterinary clinic, hospitals, medical and dental laboratories, nursing, convalescent and extended care facilities, rehabilitation centers, sanitarium/mental institutions

Lodging Places: Hotels/motels

Professional Services

Personal Services

Recreation and Amusement Services

Repair Services: Motorized vehicle repair-minor, bicycle repair, electrical and electronic repair-large, electrical and electronic repair-small, gunsmith, locksmith, reupholstery, furniture refinishing and repair, small motor repair, watch, clock and jewelry repair

Miscellaneous Services: Car wash, discotheques, drinking establishments, dry cleaners, exterminators, food catering, funeral parlor, lawn care/landscaping, lounge, mail order office, nightclub, photography studio, rental of light equipment, rental of vehicles or heavy equipment, sign painting services

Technical Schools: Business Schools, trade schools, vocational schools

Miscellaneous: Flea markets-enclosed, parking-off-street, research activities

GROUP 3:

Place of Assembly

Manufacturing, Processing and Assembly: Cabinet shop-large

Open Uses of Land Heavy: Junk Yards, Open Storage

Transportation Facilities: Railroad switching and classification yard, truck terminal

Warehousing: Warehouse, warehouse-mini

Miscellaneous: Crematorium, lumberyard, flea markets-open, publishing and printing, sexually oriented businesses, slaughterhouse, stadium, wholesale distribution